

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Official Letter dated January 19, 2005. The Examiner withdrew the previously required restriction requirement. The Examiner objected to the Figures as disclosing improper reference numerals. As indicated above, Replacement Sheets are submitted herewith to make the corrections suggested by the Examiner. With respect to the Drawings, Fig. 5a has been amended to replace reference numeral 14' with 14. Fig. 3 has been amended to correct the components to which reference numerals 14 and 30 point. Therefore, the Applicant requests that the objections to the Figures be withdrawn. The Examiner also stated that the limitations of Claims 12 and 13 are not shown in the Figures. Claim 12 has been cancelled.

The Examiner objected to the Specification as containing several informalities. The Specification has been amended to correct those informalities. Therefore, the Applicant requests that the objections to the Specification be withdrawn. The Examiner objected to Claim 1 as containing an inconsistent terminology. Claim 1 has been amended to correct this inconsistency. The Examiner also stated that there was no antecedent basis in the Specification for the claim language "an outer cylindrical surface". The Applicant directs the Examiner to Page 3, Lines 12-24 where the Applicant describes an embodiment of the invention wherein the core shaft has "an outer cylindrical surface". Furthermore, as described at Page 8, lines 27-32 the core shaft 14 has an outer *diameter* such that the inner bore 30 of the damping washer 20 lightly abuts and contacts against an outer surface of the core shaft 14. Therefore, the specification provides proper antecedent basis for the claim language and this objection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner also rejected Claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 103(a) as being anticipated by prior art. Claims 2, 3, and 12 have been cancelled. Claim 1 has been amended. In view of the following remarks, favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejected Claim 3 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C 103(a) over U.S. Patent 3,408,830 to Sutaruk et al., or U.S. Patent 2,889,695 to Moeller, in view of U.S. Patent 2,761,297 to Buchsteiner. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. The Applicant's invention now relates to a drive shaft assembly for automotive applications for transmitting a rotary drive. The drive shaft assembly includes a central flexible rotatable core shaft having an outer cylindrical surface, an outer sleeve surrounding the central flexible core shaft and spaced from the core shaft, and at least one elastomeric damper located within the outer sleeve and positioned at a location along the length of the drive shaft assembly, the damper extending to and abutting against the outer cylindrical surface of the core shaft. The damper comprises an elastomeric washer with an inner bore defined in the center, the inner bore corresponding to the outer cylindrical surface of the core shaft. The damper has a cross sectional profile which radially tapers to an apex at the defined inner bore of the washer thereby providing a knife edge support for the core shaft. Support for this amendment can be found in the specification at Page 9m, lines 9-26.

The cited references fail to disclose Applicant's invention as defined in claim 1. Specifically, the Sutaruk and Moeller references do not disclose the use of a damper having a cross sectional profile which radially tapers to an apex at the defined inner bore of the washer thereby providing a knife edge support for the core shaft. Instead, they both disclose using cylindrical tubular members having a relatively large cylindrical surface contact area which undesirably increases friction and drag of the drive shaft assembly. The Buchsteiner reference discloses journal members (2) which do not have a cross sectional profile which radially tapers to an apex at the defined inner bore of the washer *thereby providing a knife edge support for the core shaft*. Instead, the journals 2 have a large arcuate shape providing a relatively large contact area and do not taper to an apex. Thus, the curved surface of the journal members is an elongated arc and therefore does not provide a "knife edge support". As clearly shown in the cross-section of Fig. 2 of the Buchsteiner reference, when flexed, the bottom portion of the journals 2 contact substantially the entire cylindrical surface of the core 1. Thus, when the shaft of the Buchsteiner reference flexes, the journal member contact surface expands thereby increasing the surface area that is in contact with the core. Furthermore, the Buchsteiner reference teaches the use of spiral springs 4, further promoting friction and drag to the flexible shaft assembly.

Thus, for at least these reasons, the Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1. Since Claims 4-11 depend from Claim 1, they should be allowable as well, for at least that reason.

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please substitute the attached Replacement Sheets containing Figs. 3 and 4, and Figs. 5a and 5b for the Figures shown on Sheets 3/4 and 4/4.